

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated March 24, 2004.

Claims 46-64 are pending in this application. Claims 46-64 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 for various reasons, and the Examiner has objected to the drawings for related reasons. Claims 46, 47, 51, 52, 56, and 57 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Fedder reference in view of Goodman. Claims 48-50, 53-55, 58-60, and 62-64 stand rejected under Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fedder in view of Seidler, Swamy, Romine and Goodman. Claim 61 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by, or in the alternative under Section 103(a) as being obvious over, Fedder.

I. Interview of June 7, 2004

Applicants' undersigned attorney wishes to thank the Examiner for taking the time to discuss the present Office Action during the in-person interview held on June 7, 2004. As the Interview Summary indicates, good progress was made on this case at the interview. Specific issues addressed during the interview are discussed below.

II. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112 and Objections to Drawings

The claims were rejected under Section 112 because it was unclear to the Examiner how the claims are directed to the various embodiments illustrated in the Figures. At the interview on June 7, 2004, the undersigned demonstrated to the Examiner how the claims read on the practical connector embodiments of Figures 4-16 and 24-32. After that discussion, the Examiner agreed that the claims are enabled by the specification as filed. *See*, Interview Summary, dated June 7, 2004. Nevertheless, the Examiner requested that Applicants add some additional cross-sectional views of the practical connector embodiments and an additional figure along the lines of Figure 1 showing two "I-beam" modules side-by-side, so that all the features of the claims are adequately illustrated in the drawings. The proposed drawing amendments and additions, and the corresponding amendments to the specification, are believed to be what the Examiner has requested. As all of the proposed amendments to the drawings and specification merely present additional views of what would

already be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art (as the Examiner has agreed), Applicants submit that none of these amendments adds new matter. Applicant respectfully submits that the present application satisfies the requirements of Section 112. Reconsideration of the Section 112 rejections and drawing objections is respectfully requested. Upon approval of the proposed amendments to the drawings, Applicants will submit a new set of formal drawings reflecting the approved changes.

III. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a)

A. Claims 46-60

As the Interview Summary further indicates, the Examiner agreed that the above requested amendments to independent claims 46, 51, and 56 to recite that the space between adjacent signal conductors is “**substantially fully**” occupied by air does appear to overcome the rejections based on Fedder. In view of this amendment, therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the Section 103(a) rejection of claims 46-60.

B. Claims 61-64

With respect to independent claim 61, Applicants’ undersigned attorney pointed out to the Examiner during the interview of June 7, 2004 that the art of record does not teach the dimensional configuration recited in claim 61. Specifically, the art of record does not teach a module having the recited structure “wherein the ratio of the height of the module to the width of the module is approximately unity.” The Examiner, however, suggested that the recited dimensions should be considered in the context of other adjacent modules. Applicants have amended claim 61 to clarify that the claimed dimensions are to be measured “when said module is placed side-by-side with other such modules.” As the art of record does not teach the features recited in claim 61, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the Section 102(b) and 103(a) rejections of this claim. Inasmuch as claims 62-64 depend from claim 61, Applicants submit that they too patentably define over the art of record for the same reasons.

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For all the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the present Office Action and an early Notice of Allowance are respectfully requested.

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